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Thank you very much for the invitation to share some of my views, particularly on the relationship of Indonesian Islam to politics and with regard to the new government of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

The completion of the election and the formation of the new government has arguably accelerated the peaceful transition of Indonesia from authoritarianism to democracy; only six years ago the autocratic Soeharto regime was forced to abruptly end its long-held power of more than three decades. Following the introduction since 1998 of liberal and multi-party politics by President BJ Habibie - who replaced President Soeharto - hopes for a smooth transition to democracy have seemingly withered away in the aftermath of the 1999 election, with continued political fragmentation and conflict among political elites and parties. In fact, the democratically elected President Abdurrahman Wahid was impeached in 2001 for mismanagement and for his erratic attitude, and was replaced by President Megawati Soekarnoputri. In this respect, in spite of a great deal of criticism towards her government, the successful 2004 general election was the greatest achievement of Megawati Soekarnoputri. With the same token, her greatest weakness was her failure to address the spread of ever-rampant KKN (*korupsi, kolusi, nepotisme*, or corruption, collusion and nepotism).

The fair, free and peaceful elections have shown to the world that with Indonesia being the largest Muslim nation in the world, Indonesian Islam is indeed compatible with democracy. As the largest Muslim country, Indonesia is neither an Islamic state nor is Islam the official religion of the state. Since its independence on August 17 1945, Indonesia has tried to adopt democracy; what has been implemented, however, has been a kind of quasi-democracy, which was called "Guided Democracy" (*Demokrasi Terpimpin*) during the period of President Soekarno and, "Pancasila Democracy" (*Demokrasi Pancasila*) during the era of President Soeharto. Therefore, Indonesian citizens have very little knowledge of and experience with real and genuine democracy. This is why in the early years of Indonesia's experience with democracy, during the so-called period of reforms (*masa reformasi*), there were many signs of the "breakdown" of